



Bernard C. "Jack" Young  
Mayor

## COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

Tom Liebel, Chairman

### STAFF REPORT



Chris Ryer  
Director

October 13, 2020

**REQUEST:** Demolition Hearing One – Determination of Architectural Significance –  
Demolish One-Story Garage

**ADDRESS:** 814 Park Avenue (Mount Vernon Historic District)

**RECOMMENDATION:** Determination that the garage at the rear of 814 Park Avenue is non-contributing to the historic district

**STAFF:** Caitlin Audette

**APPLICANT:** Carballo Architecture

### SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT

Mount Vernon Historic District: The Mount Vernon Historic District encompasses roughly 40 blocks surrounding Mount Vernon Place. The contributing buildings within the district include a diversity of styles and building types including mansions, apartments, offices, and religious structures. The period of significance for the Mount Vernon Historic District extends from 1810 to 1945.

#### Site Conditions/Architectural Description:

The garage is located at the rear of 814 Park Avenue. This deep garage faces Tyson Street, a narrow street which functions as an alley for the properties along Park Avenue. The one-story garage is composed of brick. A modern metal roll-up garage door is centrally located on the west elevation beneath the sole decorative element, a steel lintel with three rosettes.

### BACKGROUND

- CHAP files do not include any alterations to the garage.

### PROPOSAL & APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES

The applicant proposes to demolish the garage at the rear of 814 Park Avenue.

Staff applied Section 3.6 Demolition Procedures of the *Baltimore City Historic Preservation Rules and Regulations*, specifically "Demolition Hearing One—Determination of Architectural Significance."

### **3.6 DEMOLITION HEARING ONE-DETERMINATION OF ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The first step in the demolition review process is a public hearing to determine if the building contributes to a local historic district or continues to meet standards for designation as a local landmark. At this hearing staff shall present the following:

1. The historical and/or architectural significance of the property;
2. The history of all structures on the property including the approximate dates of additions and significant alterations;
3. A determination of the historical and/or architectural significance of a structure's additions, significant alterations, or ancillary buildings; and
4. Application of criteria for designation to the structure in question.

A determination regarding the significance of the structure will be made prior to considering details of the demolition and hardship application, and any projects for new construction on the site. Doing so allows the Commission to determine the importance of the structure solely upon architectural and historical criteria. If a structure does not meet the criteria or contribute to the historic character of a local district, then an Authorization to Proceed for demolition shall be issued.

#### ***History/Architectural Significance—History of Structure***

##### ***History***

The garage at 814 Park Avenue is not original to the construction of the main building at the site and was likely constructed following the demolition of the historic carriage house in the late 1940s, outside of the period of significance. This garage is shown in the 1951 Sanborn Map where it is listed as housing 14 cars. The previous Sanborn Map from 1936 shows a two-story carriage house at the location.

##### ***Architectural Significance***

The simple brick garage possesses neither the simple charm of the modest carriage houses and rowhomes that line Tyson Street nor the high style of the buildings along Park Avenue. The utilitarian structure was built to house cars and continues to serve this function with little ornamentation or distinctive form.

### **2.2 CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATING DISTRICTS AND LANDMARKS**

...[T]he Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation will apply the following criteria in relation to the procedures for historic district and landmark designation.

#### **CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION**

The quality of significance in Baltimore history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, public interiors, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

1. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Baltimore history; or

2. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in Baltimore's past;  
or
3. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
4. That have yielded or may be likely to yield information important in Baltimore prehistory or history.

### ***Present Conditions and Application of Criteria for Designation***

#### ***Present Conditions***

The garage at 814 Park Avenue is in poor condition. A lack of maintenance to the building has resulted in a building with missing mortar, loose and missing bricks, mature vegetation growing from the walls and roof, and a deteriorating roof (*Image 1*). The brick has been painted, and this paint is loose and missing from large portions of the brick. A portion of an adjacent garage wall conceals some of the south elevation; the space between these two walls is the location of the largest plant growth (*Image 2*).

#### ***Application of Criteria for Designation***

The garage at the rear of 814 Park Avenue is not significant under the Criteria for Evaluation as it does not represent association with events important to the history of Baltimore, or the lives of persons significant in Baltimore's past, or embody distinctive characteristics of construction or architecture, or is likely to yield information important to Baltimore's prehistory or history.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS**

The Mount Vernon Architectural Review Committee was notified about this proposal; no response has been received from the neighborhood to date.

### **ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION**

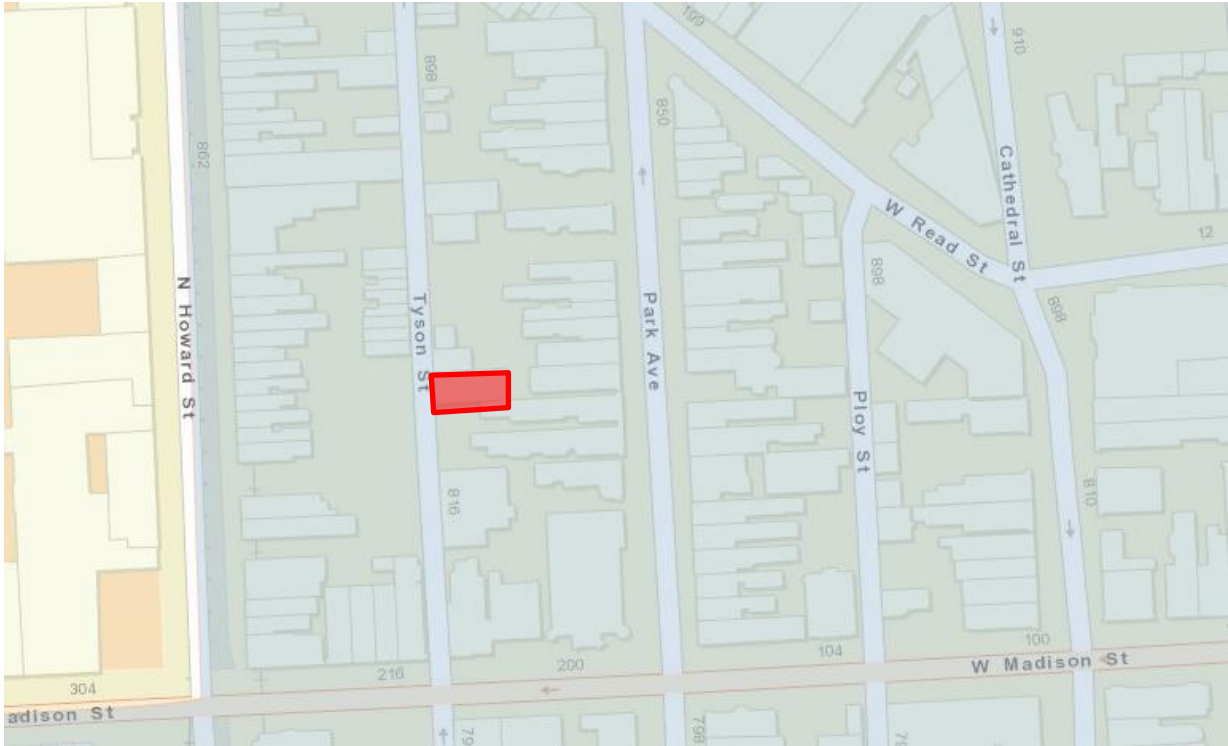
Staff finds that the garage at the rear of 814 Park Avenue lacks architectural significance and was likely constructed after the period of significance. Additionally, the building is severely deteriorated with extensive damage to the roof and walls from vegetation and lack of maintenance.

**Staff recommends a determination that the building does not contribute to the historic district.**

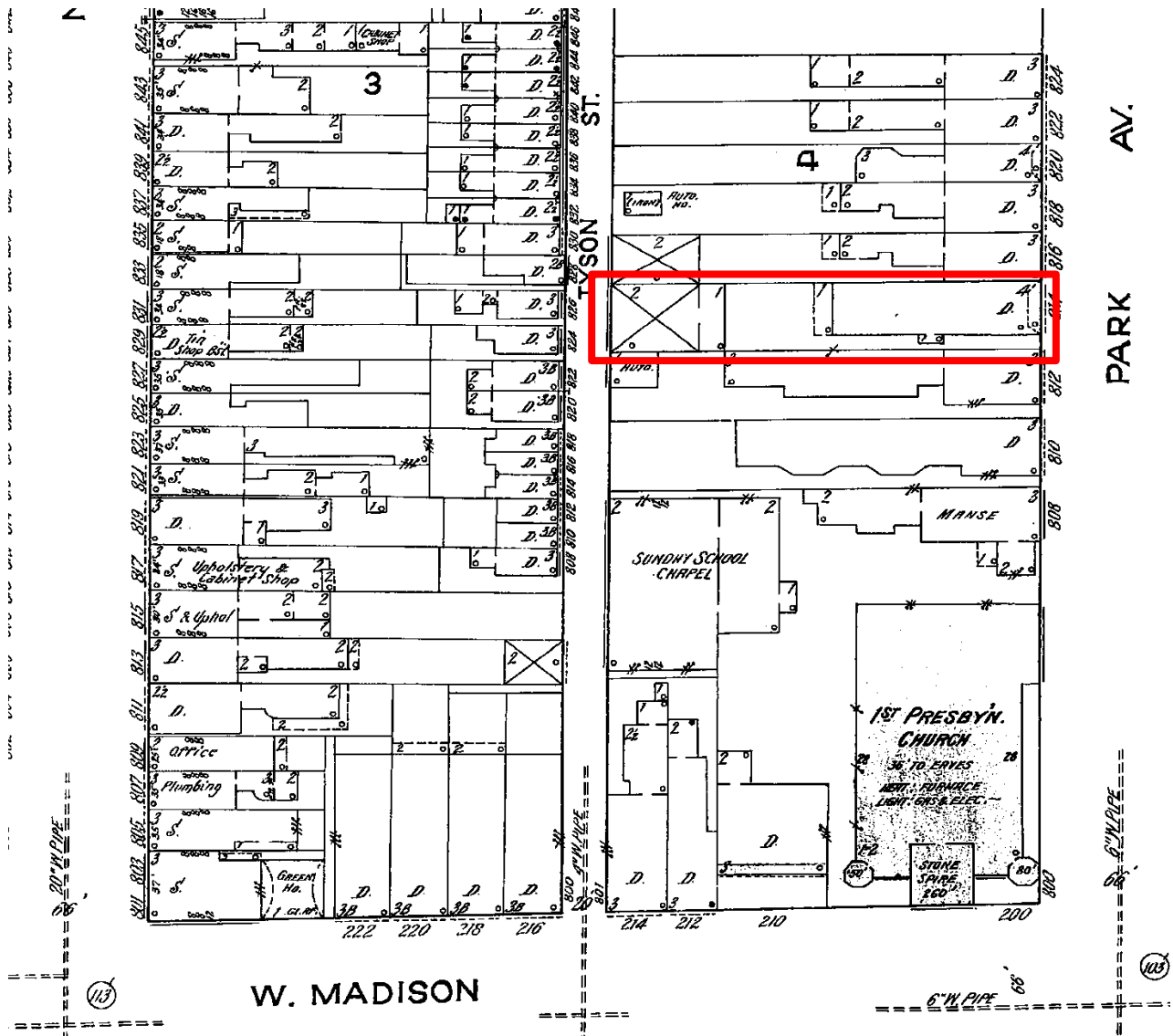


**Eric Holcomb**  
**Director**

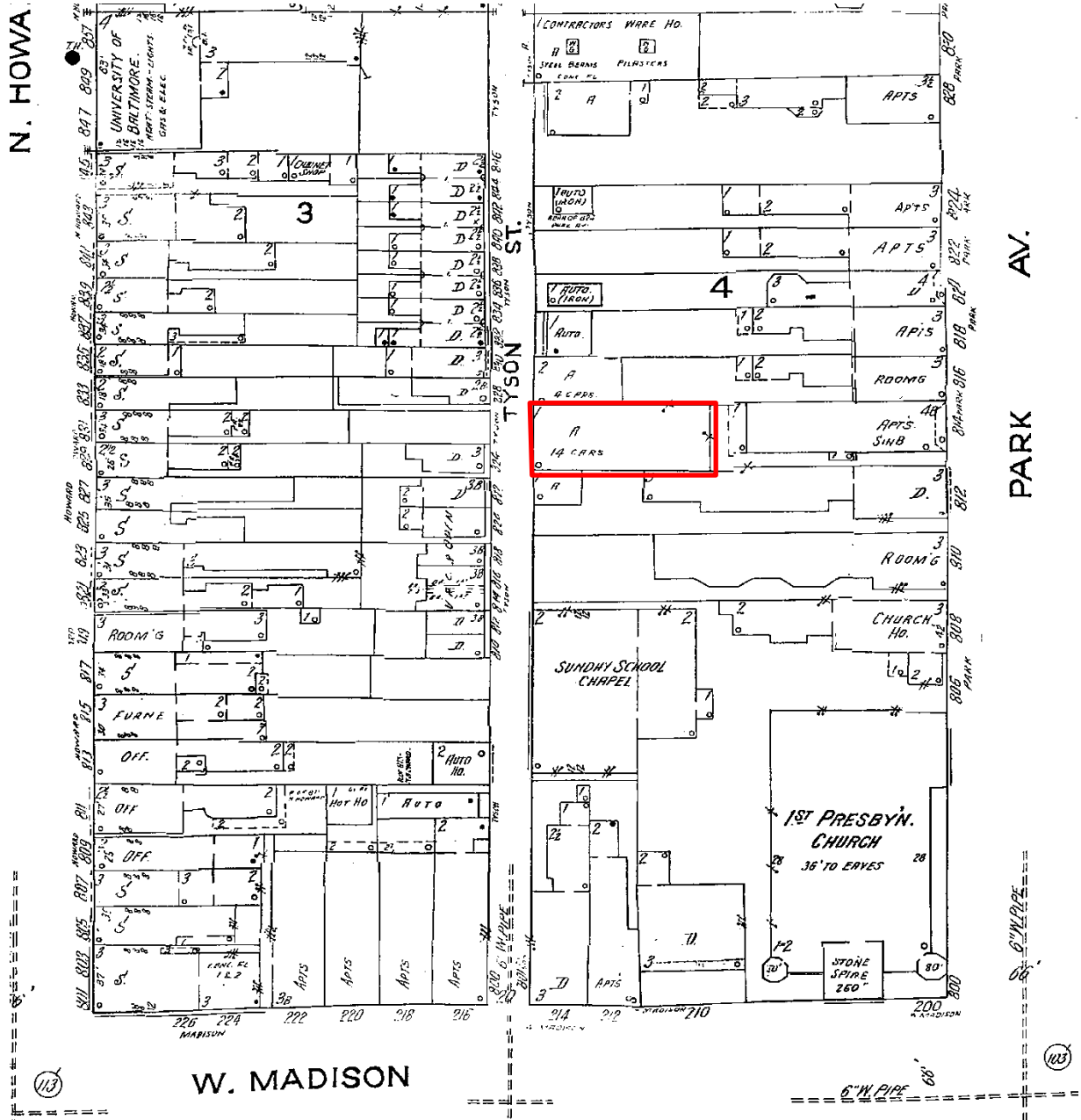
## MAP AND IMAGES



*Map 1:* Location of Site in Mount Vernon Historic District (blue)



Map 2: 1936 Sanborn Map; 814 Park Avenue, including a two-story carriage house, is outlined in red.



Map 3: 1953 Sanborn Map; the rear garage at 814 Park Avenue is outlined in red.



*Image 1:* May 2020 view of garage (image provided by neighboring property owner)





*Image 2:* October 2020 photo of the building from Tyson Street; the poor condition of the brick is visible, as is the vegetation growing out of the building, including the fast-growing invasive Tree of Heaven, which has an aggressive and damaging root system.